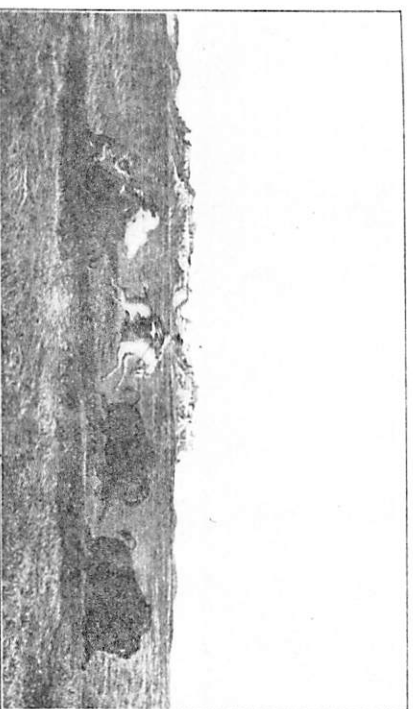


lariats of the horses, when staked outside the camp, and scare and scatter them in all directions. As a means of protection, the wagons at night were formed into a "corral." It was done by arranging them in a circle or an oval, with the tongues outside, and a fore wheel of each wagon locked in a hind wheel of the one ahead. The stock were kept inside the enclosure, an opening at either end being carefully guarded.*

Hunting the Bison. At Grand Island, the prairie was alive with herds of bison—improperly called buffalo. The Pioneers indulged in a hunt. Twelve men on horseback and twelve afoot, were given the task of providing meat for the whole company. Most of them had never seen a bison before, and some were simple enough to try to kill one by shooting him full in the forehead. The hair and skull were so thick that the bullets rebounded without having made the least impression. Ten of the animals, pierced in more vulnerable spots, were killed and taken to camp. The

*A good idea of a stampede is given in the following bit of description, written by one of the early emigrants to Salt Lake Valley: "At a very early hour, some one was carelessly shaking a big buffalo robe at the back of a wagon, when a number of the cattle in the corral took fright and started to run; these frightened others; they began bellowing, and all in a huddle ran for the gateway of the enclosure. This being too narrow for the rushing multitude that thronged into the passage, they piled themselves one upon another, until the top ones were above the tops of the wagons, jarring and moving some of them from their places. The inmates, suddenly roused from sleep, and not knowing the cause of the terrible uproar and confusion, were almost paralyzed with fear. At length, some of the cattle broke from the enclosure, the bellowing subsided, and quiet was restored; but the fright caused considerable suffering to those whose nerves were not equal to the strain. In the stampede two wagon wheels were crushed, several oxen had horns knocked off, and one cow was killed."



HUNTING THE BISON.

Pioneers were advised by their leader not to kill game in mere sport, but only when they needed it for food. Now and then the skull of a dead bison served as a post office, in which to leave letters for friends who were following.

Crossing the Platte. At Fort Laramie the river was crossed on a ferry boat, hired from a Frenchman in charge of the post. This fort was originally a station of the Hudson Bay Company, which carried on a great business in the fur trade. In the Black Hills region the Pioneers built rafts and made a ferry of their own, helping over the river at that point several companies of Missourians, bound for Oregon. They were paid for this service in flour, meal and bacon, at eastern prices.

